

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A material conveyance apparatus comprising:

a belt having a first side edge, a second side edge, first magnets secured relative the first side edge and second magnets secured relative the second side edge;

a first support structure having third magnets; and

a second support structure having fourth magnets;

wherein the belt is disposed with respect to the first and second support structures such that a magnetic force between the first magnets and the third magnets supports the first side edge, and a magnetic force between the second magnets and the fourth magnets supports the second side edge.

2. (Original) The material conveyance apparatus of claim 1 wherein a lateral direction is defined between the first side edge and the second side edge, wherein the magnetic forces supporting the side edges include components in said lateral direction.

3. (Currently Amended) The material conveyance apparatus of claim 2 further comprising at least one lateral support device coupled to the first support ~~device~~ structure and the second support ~~device~~ structure to create lateral outward force between the first support ~~device~~ structure and the second support ~~device~~ structure.

4. (Currently Amended) The material conveyance apparatus of claim 3 wherein the at least one lateral support device includes a flexible length device allowing the distance between the first support ~~device~~ structure and the second support ~~device~~ structure to vary.

5. (Currently Amended) The material conveyance apparatus of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1 further comprising:

a first ~~longitudinal member~~ beam secured via at least a first arm to the first support structure to provide vertical support thereto;

a second ~~longitudinal member~~ beam secured via at least a second arm to the second support structure to provide vertical support thereto;

a cross member secured to the first ~~longitudinal member~~ arm and the second ~~longitudinal member~~ arm to provide lateral support to both beams ~~longitudinal members~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The material conveyance apparatus of claim ~~[[5]]~~ 1, further comprising:

first and second beams extending along an axial length of the belt;

a first arm secured to the first support structure to provide vertical support between the first support structure and the first beam;

a second arm secured to the second support structure to provide vertical support between the second support structure and the second beam; and

first and second lateral support devices;

wherein ~~[[a]]~~ the first lateral support device provides lateral force between the first ~~longitudinal member~~ arm and the second ~~beam~~ support structure, and ~~[[a]]~~ the second lateral

support device provides lateral support between the second longitudinal member arm and the first beam support structure.

7. (Original) The material conveyance apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

a longitudinal member disposed beneath and between the first support structure and the second support structure;

a first arm pivotably secured to the longitudinal member and also secured to the first support structure;

a second arm pivotably secured to the longitudinal member and also secured to the second support structure.

8. (Original) The material conveyance apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a lateral support member coupled between the first arm and the second arm and providing a force pushing the first arm away from the second arm.

9. (Original) The material conveyance apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least the third and fourth magnets are electro-magnets which have variable magnetic properties that can be modulated by the application of an electric signal.

10-15. (Cancelled).

16. (Currently Amended) A materials conveyance apparatus comprising:

a belt having a first side edge and a second side edge, each side edge including a number of engaging devices including a number of magnets;

a first support rail including a number of magnets adapted to be engaged by the engaging devices; and

a second support rail including a number of magnets adapted to be engaged by the engaging devices;

wherein the belt is disposed with respect to the support rails such that the magnets of the support rails repel the magnets of the engaging devices and provide support to the belt.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising a tension member disposed with respect to at least one of the support rails to cause lateral tension in the belt between the first side edge and the second side edge.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 further comprising a roller disposed with respect to the belt to provide vertical support to the belt.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising an electrical connection to at least one of the number of magnets, wherein the electrical connection and a magnet coupled to the electrical connection are adapted to vary the magnetic field created by the magnet.